

# Call of the Canyon

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

MARCH 21, 2008

## Spring Calendar of Events

### Wildflowers Revealed

Enjoy the beauty of local wildflowers as we discuss the reproductive strategies of plants during a two-mile roundtrip hike.

**Saturday, March 29**  
**10-11:30 a.m.**

### Lava Tubes Tour

Join park staff for a two-mile roundtrip hike and the chance to explore the unique formations of a lava tube.

**Saturday, April 5**  
**10-11:30 a.m.**

### Scorpion Search

Have you ever wanted to see a scorpion up close? Join park staff and explore the Sand Dunes in search of scorpions!

**Saturday, April 12**  
**8:30-9:30 p.m.**

*Also offered...*

**Saturday, May 24**  
**9-10 p.m.**

### Spring Sketchwalk

Celebrate *Earth Day*! Join distinguished artist **Jeane George Weigel** on this

1.5-mile, roundtrip hike. Refine your 'eye for life' and express your passion for the Canyon! Art experience not required.

**Saturday, April 19**  
**9-11 a.m.**

### Desert Reptile Awareness

Are you aware that Southern Utah has the greatest number of reptiles in the state because of its diverse plant communities? Join **Ann McLuckie**, Wildlife Biologist, on a morning hike in desert tortoise habitat and look for signs of reptiles! Also, learn about their unique desert adaptations during an evening slideshow. Registration required for each activity.

**Saturday, April 26**  
**9-11 a.m., Hike**  
**6:30-7:30 p.m., Program**

### Hawks Up Close

Meet a live red-tailed hawk and learn more about these amazing birds

during a Friday evening program offered by guest naturalists **Kathy Donnell** and **Wendy Wilson**. Saturday, don't miss the chance to visit with a red-tailed hawk at park headquarters!

**Friday, May 2**  
**6:30-7:30 pm, Program**  
**Saturday, May 3**  
**9:30-11:30 am, "Meet and Greet"**

### Spring Constellation Party

Join guest naturalist, **Crystal Carpenter**, for a Snow Canyon star party. Learn about several spring constellations and how to spot them in the night sky.

**Saturday, May 10**  
**9-10:30 p.m.**

### Moonlight Hike

Join park staff for a moonlit two-mile, canyon hike. Enjoy the unique opportunity to see the Snow Canyon nightlife!

**Saturday, May 17**  
**9-10:30 p.m.**

*All listed events are free and open to the public. Program registration is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the two days preceding the scheduled event. Please register by phone or in person. For more information or to register for a program contact park staff at (435)628-2255.*

## ROCKIN' UTAH

*Reaching Out  
Connecting Kids  
In Nature*

### Make Your Own Rock Art

While rock art is quite beautiful, chances are it wasn't created for its looks. Rock art, such as petroglyphs, was used to convey messages and ideas. Explore a small rock art site and learn who created it; discuss its meaning and create your own "rock art" to take home. This program is free with payment of \$5 park entry fee. Registration required.

**Thursday, Apr. 24**  
**6:30-8:00 p.m.**

**Thursday, May 22**  
**6:30-8:00 p.m.**



*-Desert Marigold, by Maria Werner*

*"The earth laughs  
in flowers."*

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## Snow Canyon State Park

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### **Utah State Parks:**

*Providing opportunities to enhance the quality of life by preserving natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.*



## Species Spotlight: Gambel's Quail

While enjoying the trails of Snow Canyon this spring, you are likely to spy this grandly plumed, plump little bird and his "fellows". One by one, they dart across your path in a curious procession; winding their way single file through the brushy landscape. The Gambel's Quail, *Callipepla gambelii*, is named in honor of William Gambel, a 19th century naturalist and explorer of the Southwestern United States. Their scientific name "callipepla" comes from the Greek kalli (beautiful) and peplos (robe). No wonder this little bird hints of pageantry!

Small ground-dwelling birds, Gambel's Quail are easily recognized by their "top knots" and scaly plumage underside. With grey, pear-shaped bodies and short legs, their average height is 11 inches with a wingspan of 14-16 inches. Males sport copper feathers on the top of their heads and black faces with white stripes above the eyes. In contrast, females have duller, thin plumes and lack black faces.

Preferring brushy and thorny vegetation, Gambel's Quail generally move about by walking and can travel surprisingly fast through the undergrowth. They are non-migratory birds and are rarely seen in flight. But if you chance to see them

fly, you would notice their flight to be short and explosive—wings beating furiously, followed by a slow glide to the ground.

Early in March, the quail will "pair-up". Females select nest sites, which are usually located on the ground and concealed by foliage. They line their shallow, bowl-shaped nests with grass, leaves and feathers. Clutches of 10-12 buff eggs will hatch three weeks after laying—all on the same day!—usually peaking in late April and May. The young quail are capable of running around and feeding soon after hatching. They tend to eat more insects, but as they mature their diet will consist mainly of plant matter and seeds.

The Gambel's Quail form mixed-parent, mixed-age coveys of 30-40 birds. Like Buckingham's guards, you often see their plumed sentry stoically keeping watch from atop a high rock or branch while the rest feed.

As the afternoon grows late, they call to one another signaling it is time to move on. Now, they will retire to a nearby roost in the lower limbs of a sheltering juniper tree. One by one, in single file, they depart; their familiar calls trailing away as they disappear in the underbrush. So, as you enjoy the green of spring and warmer temperatures, keep an eye out for the young new additions to the 'quail parade'.



*-male Gambel's Quail*



*-female Gambel's Quail*